(F 1°)

A

SERMON

At the Funeral of

THE HONORABLE

Judge FOSTER.

See P. 36 - 25

The Character and Bleſſedneſs of a diligent and faithful Servant:

A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT

BROOKFIELD,

October 19, 1779, at the FUNERAL of

THE HONORABLE

JEDEDIAH FOSTER,

ESQUIRE,

ONE OF THE JUSTICES OF THE

SUPERIOR COURT

In the STATE of MASSACHUSETTS;

Who died October 17, 1779, Ætat. 53.

By *NATHAN FISKE*, A. M.
Paſtor of the Third CHURCH in BROOKFIELD.

HIS LORD SAID UNTO HIM, WELL DONE THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT: THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE THEE RULER OVER MANY THINGS: ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD.——MATTHEW 25. 21.

PROVIDENCE:
PRINTED BY BENNETT WHEELER.

A FUNERAL SERMON.

LUKE xii. 43.

Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.

OUR divine Maſter, who earneſtly deſired and endeavored the Inſtruction, Sanctification and Salvation of Mankind, had juſt been giving ſome important Counſel and Advice to the People that attended Him, reſpecting their Preparation for the coming of the Son of Man. Having endeavored to detach their Minds and Purſuits from the Earth and its Enjoyments, He exhorts them, v. 31, "to ſeek rather the Kingdom of God," aſſuring them that "all theſe Things," i. e. all the Neceſſaries of Life, "ſhall be added unto them." And to quicken their Diligence in accompliſhing the Work aſſigned them, ſo as to meet their Lord with Decency, Compoſure and Delight, He adds this Advice in the 36th v. "Let your Loins be girded about and your Lights burning." This refers to the Cuſtom which then obtained, for Servants to ſit up for their Maſters, when neceſſarily abſent till late in the Night, and to the

the Vigilance and active Posture with which they waited for them. They had *their Loins girded about*, that so the long Garments which they wore, need not entangle nor retard them; *and their Lights burning*, that no Hindrance or Inconvenience might arise; that so when their Lords arrived, they should not have so much as to strike a Light, or even to tuck up their Clothes, but immediately to wait upon them.* In this Sense it is explained in the following Words; "And ye yourselves like unto Men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the Wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." This Parable is continued, the better and more forcibly to recommend Watchfulness and Diligence in the Christian Life, and to set forth, in a more striking Light, the Felicity of those who are found thus employed: "Blessed are those Servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching, &c." After making use of another Similitude, by way of Illustration and Inforcement, our Lord concludes the Whole with this important Exhortation, "Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an Hour when ye think not."—— *Peter* not being certain whether this Parable and the Instructions couched therein, had any further Reference than to his Fellow-Disciples, asks this Question, "Lord, speakest thou this Parable unto us, or even to all?" This led our Saviour further to recommend, and inculcate on his Hearers, Fidelity in the Service, and Watchfulness for the coming, of their Lord and Master.

* Vide Dodd, in loc.

Maſter. "Who then is that faithful and wiſe Steward, whom his Lord ſhall make Ruler over his Houſhold, to give them their Portion of Meat in due Seaſon? Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing." Theſe Words, though moſt frequently applied to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, are alſo applicable to Magiſtrates and all other Denominations of Men, every one of which has a certain Sphere of Duty aſſigned him, which he is diligently and faithfully to diſcharge, being actuated by a Concern to approve himſelf to his Maſter, to benefit his Fellow-Servants, and to be found of his Judge in Peace. Whoever is appointed to any Office or Truſt in the great Family of God (and there is no Perſon that is not appointed to ſome) is under Obligation to Diligence and Fidelity; and this is his higheſt Wiſdom, Honor and Happineſs; for if he continue "ſo doing" till his Lord's Arrival, he ſhall be "bleſſed," and receive an ample Reward.

I ſhall conſider the following Things, as comprehending the Sum of the Inſtruction contained in the Text, taken in Connection with the Reſt of Chriſt's Diſcourſe.

I. That all Mankind are the Servants of God.

II. They are bound to be faithful in the Diſcharge of the ſeveral Duties aſſigned them.

III. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt will come to take an Account of his Servants.

IV.

IV. Theſe Servants ſhall be pronounced bleſſed, and made forever happy, who ſhall be found diligently and faithfully employed, when their Lord arrives.

I. All Mankind are the Servants of God.

As God is the firſt Cauſe, and the laſt End of all Things; as every Thing that has Exiſtence was made by him and for him, all Creatures may be conſidered as his Servants. The whole Univerſe is the Houſhold of God: He ſits at the Head of the Family—appoints unto every Creature its Rank and Buſineſs;—to ſome a higher, and to others a lower Office, and requires them all to ſerve him. The Pſalmiſt ſpeaking of the Earth and its Appurtenances, ſays, "They continue this Day according to thine Ordinances; for all are thy Servants."* The human Race are the Creatures of his Hand, the Subjects of his Government, and Servants in his Family. He is the Former of our Bodies, and the Father of our Spirits, and furniſhed us with all thoſe Powers which render us capable of ſerving him, and of enjoying Happineſs ourſelves, or communicating it to others. He upholds our Souls in Life, and gives us Scope and Opportunity for the Exerciſe and Improvement of our various Faculties. So that God hath a more abſolute Right to us, than the Potter hath to the Clay, which he hath purchaſed with his Money, faſhioned by his Skill, and preſerved by his Care. No earthly Prince, no Parent, no Maſter, hath ſuch

* Pſalm 119, 91.

ſuch an indiſputable Claim to the Obedience of his Subject, his Child, or his Slave, as God hath to ours.' Our whole Time, from our firſt commencing moral Agents, till God diſmiſſes us from our Poſt—every Talent, and all the various Uſes and Improvements we can make thereof, ought to be dedicated to that Being from whom we received them, "whoſe we are, and whom we ought to ſerve." And God has a Right to us, not only as we are his Creatures, but as we are his preſerved—his redeemed—his infinitely obliged—and the moſt of us, his dedicated Creatures: We are his purchaſed Poſſeſſion. Since then we are the Lord's, by Ties ſo various and ſtrong, it is our indiſpenſable Duty to acknowledge and demean ourſelves as ſuch.

But though we are all the Servants of God, we have not all the ſame Capacity, nor Station, nor Employment in his Houſhold. Nothing is more obvious than the Diverſities of Gifts, Situations, Occupations, and Circumſtances of Mankind. Some are Stewards and Overſeers in God's Family, and are appointed to direct, and give Orders to ſubordinate Servants. Some are exalted to Places of Truſt and Authority in Church or State; while others revolve in a lower Sphere, and have only to execute the Commands of their Superiors.

And as the external Situations and Circumſtances of Men are various, ſo are their intellectual Powers and Advantages. Some are endowed with a ſuperior Genius, Underſtanding,

Memory, Judgment, or Knowledge; while others have only that which is common, and others ſcarcely that. Some, by their natural and acquired Endowments, are fitted for Counſel and Legiſlation; others for Execution: Some to ſit in Judgment; and others to plead at the Bar: Some for the Propagation and Defence of the Goſpel: Some to lead, and others to compoſe Armies: And ſome only for the common Employments of Life; where indeed, by Honeſty and Induſtry, they may be greatly uſeful, and anſwer the Demands of their great Maſter.—All this Variety and Gradation in the ſeveral Ranks and Capacities of Men, is not the Effect of undeſigning Chance; but the Reſult of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, for the Advantage, Security and Perfection of Societies ſmall and great; and of Mankind in general. One Man is not, in any Reſpect, exalted above his Brethren, by mere Accident; but according to the Appointment of him, who is "wonderful in Counſel and excellent in working." For "Promotion cometh neither from the Eaſt, nor from the Weſt, nor from the South: But God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and ſetteth up another."* A Being of infinite Knowledge and Wiſdom, as well as of Goodneſs and Power, ſits at the Head of the Univerſe, and holds the Reins of univerſal Government in his Hands. His Kingdom ruleth over all: And 'tis he that conducteth the Affairs of this World, though by ſubordinate Agents of various Turns, Tempers, Offices and Abilities. "The Kingdom is the Lord's, and He

* Pſalm 75, 6, 7.

He is the Governor among the Nations." Whoever is capable of obſerving muſt ſee that the different Diſpoſitions, and Capacities of Mankind, and their different Stations and Circumſtances in Life, are Means in the Hand of Providence, for the Regulation, Improvement, and great Emolument both of Individuals and of Societies. The Poſſeſſion of Talents, and of Talents differing in Number and Value from thoſe poſſeſſed by others, is from Him who made us what we are: And He that made us what we are, made us for ſome wiſe Purpoſe—for carrying on ſome Part of the Buſineſs of God's Family, that the Good of the Whole may be the better promoted. He who gave us our Talents and Rank in his Houſhold, gave us alſo theſe Commands, "Occupy till I come,"—be "not ſlothful in Buſineſs but fervent in Spirit ſerving the Lord." Which brings me to the next Obſervation, viz.

II. The Servants of God are bound to be faithful in the Diſcharge of the ſeveral Duties aſſigned them.

Diligence and Fidelity are juſtly required of all Servants; eſpecially of thoſe who are under the ſtrongeſt Engagements to their Maſter in Heaven. "A Son honoreth his Father, and a Servant his Maſter: if then I be a Father, where is mine Honor? And if I be a Maſter, where is my Fear? Saith the Lord of Hoſts."* Be we high or low, learned or ignorant, Rulers or Subjects, Maſters or Servants, Parents or Children, in the Church or in the State, there is

* Malachi, i. 6.

is ſome Duty incumbent on us in that Situation, which we are faithfully to perform—ſomething for us to do in the Service of God and our Generation. And what this Duty and Service is, may be learned from our Talents, Connections and Sphere of Action. To fill up our Places and Stations, and diſcharge faithfully the Duties ariſing out of them, according to our Abilities, is required of all. And in Proportion to our Abilities, Endowments, and Opportunities, are God's and the Public's Expectations and Demands from us. The more Talents—the greater Powers—the higher Office, any are intruſted with, the greater are their Obligations; and of courſe the greater their Guilt if they abuſe and miſimprove them. Negligence, Unfaithfulneſs, and Sloth, in any Members of Society, eſpecially in the more important Ones, is injurious to the complicated Houſhold, and greatly diſpleaſing to the Supreme Head. This is what our Saviour declares in the Sequel of this Diſcourſe: "And that Servant which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his Will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, ſhall be beaten with few Stripes. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required: And to whom Men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more."—If we are placed in any public Station either in Church or State, the Duties of that Station are to be faithfully diſcharged: The divine Being, by placing us in that Sphere of Action, has put a Price into our Hands to promote the general Good;

Good; and we ſhould have a Heart to it, and diligently improve it. And if we are only in a private Capacity, we are ſo to demean ourſelves in the Relations in which we ſtand, as the Nature of thoſe Relations requires. As Subjects, we are conſcientiouſly to obey the juſt and conſtitutional Laws of the Land; pay due Honor and Submiſſion to thoſe that are in Authority, and promote, as much as we can, the Peace and Intereſt of Society, both civil and eccleſiaſtical. As Maſters of Families, we muſt take care of thoſe committed to our Charge, endeavoring to make them comfortable and uſeful in this World, and happy in the next. As Huſbands and Wives, we are to be ſtedfaſt in the marriage Covenant, and diſcharge with Fidelity the ſeveral conjugal Duties. As Friends, and Neighbours and private Chriſtians, we ſhould be courteous and obliging, and full of Benevolence to all about us, contributing all in our Power to render the Lives of others more eaſy and comfortable, more virtuous and examplary. A contrary Temper and Behaviour to this muſt be highly diſpleaſing to the Parent and Maſter of the Univerſe, who delights to ſee his Children and Servants united, benevolent and happy. This appears from what our Lord ſays a Verſe or two after our Text: "But and if that Servant ſay in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and ſhall begin to beat the Men Servants and the Maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken: The Lord of that Servant will come in a Day when he looketh not for him, and at an Hour when he is not ware, and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him his Portion with the Unbelievers."

But

But in Order to be faithful in the Diſcharge of the Duties we owe to our Fellow-Servants, we muſt act from Principles of Piety; from Love to God and Regard to his Will. And this leads me to ſpeak of Fidelity to our Maſter in thoſe Duties which we owe more immediately to him. We muſt acknowledge and glorify God as our Creator, Preſerver, Redeemer and Benefactor:—Venerate and adore his ſuper-eminent Attributes;—ſtand in Awe of his Power and Majeſty;—revere his Juſtice, confide in his Veracity and Faithfulneſs, admire and imitate his Mercy and Goodneſs, and always act under an influential Senſe of his Omnipreſence and Omniſcience.——Moreover, if we would faithfully diſcharge all the Duties incumbent on us as the Servants of God, we muſt believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; acknowledging him to be the only begotten Son of God; the only Way, the Truth and the Life, through whom alone we can have Acceſs to the Father in Prayer, or find Admiſſion into his Preſence hereafter. We muſt learn from his Inſtructions and Example, confide in his Merits, and ſubmit to his Government. Being bought with a Price, even with his moſt precious Blood, we muſt glorify him in our Bodies, and in our Spirits which are his.—Our thus living in all good Conſcience towards God will be the proper Ground and Motive of our living in all good Conſcience towards Men. From the Principles of Love to God and Faith in Chriſt, a faithful Servant will diligently ſerve his Generation. That Man alone will be pronounced and made bleſſed, at the Appearance

of

of Chriſt, who from religious Principles hath carefully conſidered the Duties of his Station, and honeſtly diſcharged them, and thereby endeavored to pleaſe God and benefit Society. If we are deſtitute of a proper Regard to the Perfections and Government of God, our own Intereſt will always predominate, and influence our Conduct; and we ſhall not ſerve our Generation, any farther than we can ſerve ourſelves by it. But if the Fear and Love of God prevail in our Hearts, they will make us good and faithful Servants in the whole Extent of our Duty; faithful to God and our Redeemer; faithful to our Neighbour and ourſelves, and faithful to the Death.

III. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt will come and take an Account of his Servants—"His Lord when he cometh."

This Expreſſion may refer either to *Death* or *Judgment*. Both theſe Events are pointed out by ſuch Phraſes as theſe, *the coming of the Son of Man, the coming of Chriſt, &c.* We are to continue in Service in God's Family below, but a limited Time: And when this Time is expired, and we have accompliſhed as an Hireling our Day, we are diſmiſſed; we muſt render an Account of our Conduct in order to receive our Wages. "The Lord cometh and reckoneth with thoſe Servants."

Some have a longer, and ſome a ſhorter Day of Trial and Service. Our Lord cometh to one at the firſt Watch, to another at the Second, to another at the Third. But no

Servant

Servant knows beforehand at what Hour his Lord will come. It concerns him, therefore, to be vigilant and active, if he would be found of him in Peace, and entitled to his Approbation. For after Death, there will be no retrieving our Neglect, or making up loſt Time, or appeaſing our Maſter with the Tears of Penitence. "After Death is the Judgment." Such as we are when our Lord cometh to diſmiſs us from Life and its Services, ſuch ſhall we be when he cometh to judge and reward us.

That the great Obſerver of Men will ſome Time or other call us to account how we have conducted ourſelves, while in his terreſtrial Family, and how we have diſcharged the Duties of our ſeveral Stations and Characters in Life, is evident both from Reaſon and Scripture. Our very make and Conſtitution, our Sentiments and Feelings, ſhew us to be accountable Creatures. Reaſon and Conſcience declare this with a Voice that may be heard, and an Energy that may be felt by all. The Light of Nature teaches us that he who created the World and its Inhabitants, exerciſes a providential Government over them; and that he who inſpects and governs the World, and hath put ſuch Powers, ſuch Laws, and ſuch Feelings into Men, will ſome Time or other, bring them before him, and make ſtrict Enquiry how they have ſpent their Lives, and improved their Capacities. And not to call them to an Account after their Time was out, would be hardly reconcileable with thoſe Ideas which the Light of Nature teaches us to form of the Juſtice, Wiſdom, and

Goodneſs

Goodneſs of the Supreme Being. "The righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs and hateth Iniquity" in his Creatures as well as in himſelf; and conſequently will approve and reward the one, and puniſh the other. But it is evident to every one that is acquainted with the preſent State of Things, that there is no public, ſtriking Difference and Diſtinction made between the Righteous and the Wicked, in this World. With regard to the Sufferings and Enjoyments of this Life, "as is the Good, ſo is the Sinner." Nay, ſometimes the Wicked proſper, while many are the Afflictions of the Righteous. Undoubtedly then, a Time is approaching, in which he who now ſuperintends the World with an impartial Eye, will judge it in Righteouſneſs, and fully vindicate the Equity of his moral Government, and demonſtrate to all Beings his Love of Holineſs and his Abhorrence of Sin, by an open Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments according to the *well* or *ill* deſerving of moral Agents.——But whatever Uncertainties attend this Point from the Light of Nature, the Light of Revelation aſſures us, that "every one muſt give Account of himſelf unto God." The New-Teſtament abounds with Declarations that our Lord and Maſter will call us to his Tribunal; that "we ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt;" that when he cometh, "his Reward is with him, to give to every Man according as his Work ſhall be;" that after the general Reſurrection, "the Dead ſhall be judged out of thoſe Things that are written in the Book" of God's Remembrance; and that "the Wicked ſhall go away into ever-

laſting Puniſhment, but the Righteous into Life eternal."* This brings me to the laſt Obſervation, viz.

IV. That thoſe Servants ſhall be bleſſed and happy who ſhall be found diligently and faithfully employed when their Lord arrives.

" Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, ſhall find *ſo doing*;" active in Duty, and vigilant in waiting for his Maſter's Arrival. He that is " ſo doing" ſhall be bleſſed, let his Lord call for him at what Hour he will. " And if he ſhall come in the ſecond Watch, or come in the third Watch, and find them ſo, bleſſed are thoſe Servants." This Bleſſedneſs is made up of ſeveral Ingredients.— Such a diligent and faithful Servant ſhall be bleſſed with inward Peace and Satisfaction.— Nothing lays ſo ſure and ſolid a Foundation for Self-Approbation, and a joyful Hope of the Approbation of our Lord, as a Conſciouſneſs of having, through Grace, been faithful to God and our Saviour, and faithful in the Diſcharge of all relative Duties, from religious Principles. " This," ſays St. *Paul*, " is our Rejoicing, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Converſation in the World."† And though by our Works we are not juſtified before God, yet by theſe is our Faith made perfect, and

* Rom. xiv. 10. Rev. xxii. 12. and xx. 12. Mat. xxv. 46.

† 2. Cor. i. 12.

and proved to be genuine. And the greater our Uſefulneſs among Men, as well as the more perfect our Obedience to the divine Will, the greater is our Conformity to our bleſſed Maſter, and the greater will be our Intereſt in his Love. And if we have that Faith in God and Chriſt, which worketh by Love, and influences to unfeigned Obedience, we ſhall be juſtified from all Things, from which we could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes, or the Law of Nature. And being juſtified by Faith, we ſhall have Peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Peace in our own Conſciences, Joy in believing, and ſhall rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God.

Such diligent and faithful Servants have a ſtable Foundation for Hope and Comfort in Death. Being able to ſay with *Hezekiah* of old, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which was good in thy Sight,"* they may adopt the Words of the Apoſtle *John*, "Now are we the Sons of God; and" though "it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, yet we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is."† Having "fought the good Fight, finiſhed their Courſe, and kept the Faith;" having improved their Talents, been faithful in their Truſts, and occupied till their Lord come, they feel themſelves "now ready to be offered," and to be able to "give up their Accounts with Joy."—Death ſhall be ſo far from ſeparating them from the Love of Chriſt, that it ſhall entirely

* 2. Kings, xx. 3. † 1. John, iii. 2.

tirely free them from the Body of Sin, and uſher them, without Spot, into the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy. Their Bodies ſhall ſleep in Jeſus; and them ſhall God bring with him when he cometh to Judgment.—And in that Day of Deciſion, when ſmall and great ſhall ſtand before God, their Righteouſneſs ſhall be brought forth as the Light and their Judgment as the Noon-day. Their Judge ſhall place them at his Right Hand, pronounce them bleſſed, and welcome them into the Joy of their Lord. *There* are Pleaſures without Allay, and Joys that never fade. *There* all Tears ſhall be wiped away, and all their Wiſhes and Deſires compleatly ſatisfied. *There* they ſhall ſee God: —walk up and down in the Light of his Countenance, and be tranſported with his Love to all Eternity.—"Bleſſed," indeed, "is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing." "Bleſſed are the Dead, who die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their Labours, and their Works do follow them." "Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City." "Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life."*

The Way being thus prepared, let us now attend to a few practical Inferences and Reflections, ſuitable to the Subject and the preſent mournful Occaſion.

1. We

* Rev. xiv. 13. xxii. 14. and ii. 10.

1. We learn from what we have heard, that a Life of Religion is a Life of Activity. It is the induſtrious, faithful, vigilant, perſevering Servant, that is commended and rewarded; the ſlothful, careleſs, unkind, and wicked Servant, is condemned and puniſhed. That Life which is preparatory to, and will be crowned with, immortal Honor and Bleſſedneſs, is a Life of indefatigable Service; a Life of ſincere Devotion and Piety towards God, and Uſefulneſs among Men;—a Life, in which all our Talents and Advantages are diligently improved; and all incumbent Duties, which we owe to our Maker, our Redeemer, our Neighbour, and ourſelves, conſcientiouſly performed. This Conſideration ſhould rouſe us from our Sloth, and ſtimulate us to double our Diligence, to redeem the Time, to ſtrain every Nerve in working the Works of him that ſent us into the World, and to look out, and prepare, for the coming of our Lord.

2. Our Subject teaches us, that Chriſtians are employed by a moſt bountiful Maſter. The God whom they ſerve, is the God of Grace, and the God of Salvation. He not only endows them with various Talents and Capacities—aſſigns them their proper Sphere of Buſineſs—and gives them neceſſary Orders and Directions; but ſupplies them at preſent with Spirit and Strength for their Work—ſupports and gladdens them with innumerable intermingled Satisfactions—allures them along by holding up to their View the promiſed glorious Reward,—and by giving them the moſt undoubted Aſſurance,

rance, that their imperfect Services, if ſincere and conſtant, ſhall not only be applauded by their Judge, in Preſence of the congregated World, but be rewarded with an Eternity of the moſt refined and exalted Happineſs.

Hence 3. The Conſideration of the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe, who are the faithful Servants of God, ſhould animate us to go through our Service with the greateſt Reſolution and Cheerfulneſs, notwithſtanding the Self-denials and Pains, or the Ingratitude and Reproach, that are often to be borne. The Service of God, indeed, is the greateſt Freedom,—the Work of Religion a delightful Work,—the Ways of Wiſdom are Ways of Pleaſantneſs,—and, to a benevolent Mind, the promoting the Virtue and Happineſs of Mankind, an agreeable Employment; yet are there many Things to be met with in this Vale of Tears that are irkſome to Fleſh and Blood, and hard to be endured. Sometimes our Stedfaſtneſs in our Profeſſion, and Adherence to our Lord and Maſter, is put to a ſevere Trial; and ſometimes our Fortitude and Patience, in going through difficult and hazardous Duties for the Benefit of others. "But none of theſe Things ſhould move us, neither ſhould we account our Lives dear unto ourſelves, ſo that we may finiſh our Courſe with Joy." Let us not ſuffer ourſelves to be diverted, impeded or diſheartened, in our Career of Service, with Reſpect to our Maſter, or Fellow-Servants, by any Danger or Difficulty; but look forward to the promiſed Bleſſedneſs. "Behold I come quickly," ſaith our Supreme Lord,

Lord, " and my Reward is with me, to give every Man according as his Work ſhall be." " Hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no Man take thy Crown." " He that endureth to the End, the ſame ſhall be ſaved."

4. What we have heard ſhould turn our Eyes and our Thoughts inward upon ourſelves, to ſee whether we are the faithful, vigilant Servants of God our Saviour, and what Grounds we have to expect a Benediction when our Maſter arrives. Have we ſuch a Senſe of the Authority which God has over us, and his Right to our conſtant and zealous Services, as conſtrains us to devote ourſelves, our Time and Talents, to be employed for his Glory? Are we ſincerely engaged in the Duties we owe to God, to Chriſt, and to Mankind? Do we " give all Diligence, adding to our Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godlineſs; and to Godlineſs, brotherly Kindneſs; and to brotherly Kindneſs, Charity?" " Are we ſo ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord?" Are we careful to leave Nothing undone, which is in the Power of our Hands to do, in advancing the Honor and Intereſt of our Maſter, and the Welfare of his Houſhold, and which we ſhall wiſh we had done, when our Lord cometh to reckon with his Servants? Are we watchful for his coming, and concerned leſt he find us *ſleeping*, inſtead of *ſo doing?* In fine, ſhould he come this Night, could we rationally expect he would pronounce us bleſſed?

5. Our

5. Our Subject adminiſters Conſolation to thoſe Mourners, who have committed, or are committing to the Duſt, their deareſt and beſt Friends, who have been the faithful Servants of God and their Generation. " Bleſſed is that Servant, whom is Lord when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing." Yea, we are aſſured, that the conſcientious Servants of Chriſt, ſhall in no wiſe loſe their Reward, let their Maſter come late or early.—*We* may be Loſers by the Departure of our virtuous Friends, but they themſelves are no Loſers.—A Family meets with an irreparable Loſs, when the wiſe and pious Head of it, is removed by Death. The Wife loſes her boſom Friend and Companion,—her Stay and Support,—the Heightner of her Comforts and Joys,—the Partner of her Cares and Sorrows,—and the Promoter of her ſpiritual Intereſt.—The Children loſe an Inſtructor and Guide of their Youth; one who naturally, and moſt affectionately cared for their State, both in this World and another;—their Example and Monitor,—and one who daily commended them to God in his Prayers.—When a Church loſes one of its principal Members, who, by his exemplary Behaviour, adorned and recommended Religion, and by his wiſe Counſels greatly benefited the Church, what a Frown muſt it be eſteemed?—When a Town is deprived by Death, of a Perſon, upon whoſe Wiſdom and Integrity it depended, to conduct its moſt important Affairs, and ſecure its eſſential Intereſts, how wide is the Breach!—And when the Public loſes a firm and ſteady Patriot,—an able Stateſman,—a wiſe Counſellor,—and an upright Judge,

Judge, how extenſive, how widely felt, how deeply to be lamented the Loſs !—In all theſe Reſpects, and under all theſe Views, is the Death of the honorable Judge *FOSTER* to be conſidered, whoſe funeral Obſequies we are now mournfully attending. All theſe, and many more Circumſtances, ſerve to aggravate the Loſs, and heighten the Grief of the widowed Partner, who before this happened, was ſtaggering under a Weight of Sorrow almoſt inſupportable.*

We grieve with you, Madam, under this recent, this redoubled, this moſt affecting Stroke !—While your Cheeks were yet wet with Tears for the Loſs of an amiable Daughter, the Fountains are again opened, and even exhauſted, by the Death of a beloved Huſband.—While your Heart was yet bleeding for your Child ſnatched from your Arms, it is now even rent aſunder for your Companion torn from your Boſom !—But though there are Circumſtances attending your Caſe, peculiarly mournful ; yet are there not Conſiderations peculiarly conſoling ! The moral Endowments—the bene-

* Miſs *Abigail Foſter*, eldeſt Daughter of Judge *Foſter*, died leſs than three Months before her Father, viz. on *July* 25th, in the 24th Year of her Age. She was a Lady of an excellent Mind and ſuperior Accompliſhments ; an Ornament and Example to her Sex, in the Sweetneſs of her Temper, and the Circle of Graces and Virtues exhibited in her daily Practice. So great was her Familiarity with Death, and Attemperedneſs for Heaven, that, when poſſeſſed with a Perſuaſion that ſhe ſhould not live long, even before ſhe was attacked by the Diſtemper of which ſhe died, as well as during the painful Progreſs of it, her Serenity, her Faith, her Fortitude, her Patience, continued unſhaken ; and ſhe rejoiced in Hope of the Glory of God.

volent Exertions—the Chriſtian Graces, which rendered your Friends uſeful and dear on Earth, attempered them for Heaven. The endearing Qualities of the Huſband—the Father—the Companion—the Friend—the Patriot—and the Chriſtian, are "acceptable to God," as well as "approved of Men," and will in no wiſe loſe their Reward. The uſeful Man—the faithful Servant of God and his Generation, ſhall receive the felicitating Euge, and a Crown of Glory. While you mourn therefore, Madam, for yourſelf, and your ſurviving Children, you will mourn with Moderation, becauſe "not without Hope," nor without an agreeable Mixture of ſweetening Ingredients in your Cup of Affliction, bitter as it is. You are not only bleſſed with a happy Steadineſs and Preſence of Mind, ſimilar to that of your deceaſed Partner's, as a Balance to the tender Paſſions, but, we truſt alſo, with the Supports of Religion, the Smiles of God's Countenance, and the Conſolations of the Spirit, which are neither few nor ſmall. Our Heart's Deſire and Prayer to God is, that theſe Comforts may continue and abound; and that the ſpecial Promiſes that are made to the Widow and the Fatherleſs, may be made good to you and to your Children.——For the bereaved Sons we cannot wiſh a greater Bleſſing, than that they may continue to be "Plants of Renown;"—may emulate, more and more, the Character of their worthy Father;—may be equally uſeful—equally eſteemed—and equally rewarded:—That, under the Influence of Religion, and the Stimulus of Benevolence, they may go on in a Courſe of active Services, to a much

much later Period than their lamented Parent; and then, depart in Peace, as he did, with the Applauſes of Conſcience—the Applauſes of their Country—and meet with the Applauſes of the Supreme Judge.——And with regard to the only ſurviving Daughter, we wiſh ſhe may be continued a Comfort to her mourning Parent, and an Ornament to her Sex:—That ſhe may ſhine in the united Accompliſhments and Virtues of her departed Siſter, and honored Mother;—that being convinced that "all Fleſh is Graſs, and the Glory of Men as the Flower of the Field;" that as "the Graſs withereth, and the Flower fadeth," ſo human Flowers, however beautiful and fragrant, may wither and drop before it is Noon;—that being mindful of this, ſhe may cultivate thoſe Graces and Habits of Goodneſs, that Familiarity with Death and the World of Spirits, and that Acquaintance with God and divine Things, which will render *her* alſo elevated in her Hopes and Converſation—fearleſs of dying—and fitted for a bliſsful Eternity.

As to this Pariſh—this Town—and the Public, how ſhall I deſcribe their Loſs in the Death of Judge *FOSTER*, or ſuggeſt Conſolation under it!—How ſpeak of it, but to reſolve it into the Will of God, who knows what is beſt—in whom we may confide that he will take Care of his own Cauſe in the World, though the Inſtruments of its Support are taken away—and who requires our dutiful Submiſſion to his ſovereign Will, even in thoſe Diſpenſations which are dark and myſterious!—"*The Supreme*

Supreme Wiſdom ſaw this fit ; and the Supreme Wiſdom cannot err !"—" Be ſtill," ſays the Almighty Ruler, " and know that I am God."

I feel myſelf unequal to the Taſk of characterizing this great and uſeful Man, according to his acknowledged Merit : But cannot forbear reflecting with Eſteem and Satisfaction upon what he *was* ;—and with the deepeſt Regret that he *is no more.*——Like the Servant who received " five Talents" from his Lord, he improved them all to the Honor of the Donor, and the Benefit of his Fellow-Creatures. So great were his Abilities both natural and acquired—ſo extenſive his Acquaintance with Men and Things—ſo ſound his Judgment—ſo good his Heart—ſo upright his Intentions—ſo ſtrong his Attachment to the Rights and Liberties of his Country and of Mankind—and ſo active and zealous in defending and ſecuring them, that few have been more employed, more confided in, or done more good. So much Dependence was had upon his Judgment and Integrity, by this and the neighbouring Towns, to adviſe, direct and tranſact, that we are now ready to look round in Deſpair, and ſay, where ſhall we hence forward find one to manage our important Concerns—to counſel us in our Perplexities—to encourage our Hearts with the Proſpect of Succeſs and Proſperity when adverſe Occurences threaten Ruin to our Land—to prevent or cure, by his pacific Diſpoſition, his mild and judicious Addreſs, unhappy Diſſentions—in ſhort, to be as the Soul and Underſtanding, to give our political Affairs a right Motion and Direction ?—So great was

our

our Confidence in his Wiſdom and Uprightneſs, that in his Hands we thought our civil Concerns and thoſe of the Public, not only ſafe, but improving.—The Fidelity and Honor with which he ſerved his Country in the various important Offices he filled, as a Member of the General Aſſembly, in which he ſat for a long Succeſſion of Years—as a Counſellor—as a Judge of the Courts, Inferior, Superior and Probate—as one of the Committee of Convention for conſtructing a Form of Government for this State, are univerſally acknowledged. This laſt Truſt indeed, he lived not to execute; a fatal Diſeaſe depriving the Public of his further Aſſiſtance, and himſelf of the Happineſs of ſeeing a wiſe Model of Government eſtabliſhed, and the Freedom and Independence of his Country ſecured.—It was his Study to be *uſeful*, and his fixt Opinion, that no Man ſhould deſire to live longer than he could be ſo. But he was ſummoned in the Midſt of his Uſefulneſs—in the Midſt of his active Services for the public Good, and when his Friends and his Country could but ill ſpare him. "His Lord when he came, found him *ſo doing*."————————But I muſt leave it to abler Pens, to give a more full, and adequate Character of the Man, who when living, was ſo juſtly and univerſally eſteemed, and being now dead, is ſo juſtly and univerſally lamented: And only add, That ſo great a Frown of Providence, as the Death of ſuch a Perſon muſt be, upon this Town and Country, calls for our Humility and Lamentation; and for our earneſt Application to the great Repairer of Breaches, and who hath the Reſidue of the Spirit, that he would

would ſanctify this Loſs to us and to the Public, as well as to the bereaved Family; and that he would raiſe up and qualify others to ſtand in the Gap, and do worthily for God and for their Generation.

TO CONCLUDE,

Let us all, both old and young, high and low, rich and poor, be ſolicitous to know what the Lord would have us to do, and do it with our Might. We know not how ſhort our Time is, nor how near our Maſter. Inſtead therefore of ſaying, "my Lord delayeth his coming," and ſo venturing upon criminal Indulgences, or any injurious Treatment of our Fellow-Servants, or ſinking into Sloth and Idleneſs, let us give all Diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure, that we may be found of our Judge in Peace. We ſee one and another of our Neighbours and Acquaintance, ſome of the higher as well as lower Servants in God's Family, called to give up their Account: "We ſee that wiſe Men die, as well as the Fool and Brutiſh." Our Turn will ſoon come; and as we know not how ſoon, we muſt "take heed, watch and pray." Let us not therefore, "be ſlothful, but Followers of thoſe, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes. Let our Loins be girded about, and our Lamps burning, and we ourſelves like unto Men who wait for their Lord. "Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing."

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACTS from the public Papers, printed at Boſton.

From the INDEPENDENT CHRONICLE, publiſhed at *Boſton, October* 28, 1779.

DIED at *Brookfield*, on the 17th Inſtant, the Honorable *JEDEDIAH FOSTER*, Eſq; one of the Juſtices of the Superior Court of this State, in the 53d Year of his Age. He in his Youth, after having received an Education at *Harvard* College, was called into public Life. He ſuſtained military Offices from a Captain up to a Colonel of a Regiment. He ſerved his Country with Approbation in the Offices of a Juſtice of the Peace, Judge of Probate, Juſtice of the Inferior and Superior Courts. For many Years he repreſented the Town of *Brookfield* at the General Court, which now, in an eſpecial Manner, feels his Loſs. While in Council, he attracted a Veneration due to that Office when held with ſingular Ability, and a ſtrict Regard to the Rights and Happineſs of the People. He was early in the true Politics of his Country, and his Attachment to her Intereſt and Freedom was exceeded by none. He was zealous, firm, and indefatigable,

tigable, in his Oppoſition to the deſpotic Meaſures of *Britain* againſt the *American* States; and ſo great was his Intrepidity, that he never was once heard to expreſs a Doubt of the Succeſs of their Cauſe. It is but Juſt, further to mention his ſtrict Regard to Morals, as founded on the Syſtem of the *Chriſtian* Religion, of which he was an early and exemplary Profeſſor. It is difficult to determine, whether his amiable and ſorrowful Conſort and bereaved Children, or the Government, to which his Services were ſo entirely devoted, moſt feel the Loſs.

From the BOSTON GAZETTE, of *November* 9, 1779.

Boſton, October 31, 1779.

ON *Sunday* the 17th of *October* Inſtant, at Half after one o'Clock, departed this Life, at his Houſe in *Brookfield*, the Honorable *JEDEDIAH FOSTER*, Eſq; Member of the General Aſſembly for that Town, and a Juſtice of the Superior Court throughout this State. On *Tueſday* following his Remains were reſpectfully interred, having been previouſly conveyed to the Rev. Mr. *Ward*'s Meeting-Houſe, where a Sermon ſuitable to the Occaſion was delivered to a large Concourſe of People, by the Rev. Mr. *Nathan Fiſk*, from this Text, *Luke* xii. 43, "*Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing.*"

As

APPENDIX.

As a very conſiderable Part of Judge *Foſter*'s Life was ſpent in the Service of the Public, and was a continual Exhibition of thoſe Virtues which render their Poſſeſſors the Light and the Ornament of their Generation, perhaps a ſhort Sketch of his Life and Character may not be unacceptable to his grateful Country.

He was born at *Andover*, on *Merimack* River, *October* 10, 1726, deſcended from an antient and reputable Family (REGINALD FOSTER's *) who came from *England* A. D. 1636, on Account of the Troubles in the Reign of *Charles* I. His Friends gave him a liberal Education, which he duly improved at *Harvard* College, where he commenced Batchelor in the Arts, A. D. 1744, in the 18th Year of his Age, and had regularly conferred on him the other Honors of the College.

Not long after he left College he ſettled at *Brookfield*, and married the ſecond Daughter of the Honorable Brigadier-General JOSEPH DWIGHT, Eſq; of that Place. Here obtaining a

* This Gentleman REGINALD FOSTER was born in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, at *Exeter*, in *England*, the latter End of the Fifteenth Century, and was deſcended of the ſame Family with Sir REGINALD FOSTER, who was made a Baronet of *England July* 21ſt, A. D. 1661, mentioned in the 30th Edition of *Chamberlayne*'s Preſent State of *Great-Britain*, and in the Heraldry Books of the *Engliſh* ——— He brought with him to *America* his Wife, with five Sons and two Daughters, with whom he ſettled at *Ipſwich*, Eaſtward of *Boſton*.—All his Children, as well as himſelf, lived to old Age.—All married and had large Families, from whom have riſen a numerous Progeny, now ſettled in different Parts of the United States of *America*.

a Character for Integrity, Ability and Fidelity, he was ſoon intruſted with the moſt important Offices in the Town, and had the principal Direction of their Affairs until the Year 1760, when he was elected their Repreſentative in the General Aſſembly, of which he was uninterruptedly a Member for Fifteen Years. During this Period, while the political Storm was gathering, which has ſince overwhelmed *Europe* and *America* with War and Bloodſhed, he manifeſted on all Occaſions a uniform and fixed Attachment for the Rights and Liberties of his Country.

The public Offices he has ſuſtained in this State are an inconteſtable Proof of the high Eſtimation he was held in by his Country. In the Adminiſtration of Governor *Shirley*, he received a Commiſſion in the Year 1754, conſtituting him a Juſtice of the Peace and of the Quorum for the County of *Worceſter*, in which Office, enlarged afterwards to extend throughout the State, he continued during Life.

In the laſt War, when a general Apprehenſion prevailed that the Enemy intended an Invaſion of the Country by Way of *Crown-Point* and *Lake-Champlain*, he received another Commiſſion from Governor *Shirley*, dated *September* 20, 1756, appointing him a Major of the Forces raiſed on that Emergency, under the Command of Major-General *Winſlow*.

Of a Genius and Temper of Mind calculated for political Life, he was, by the unſolicited Suffrages of a free People, at the Election in

May

May 1774, choſen a Member of the Governor's Council.—But as he had been one of the memorable NINETY-TWO, ſo greatly celebrated, who refuſed *to reſcind* the Vote for the circular Letter, and had always in the General Aſſembly, and their Committees, of which he was often a Member, oppoſed the Meaſures of *Bernard* and *Hutchinſon* for abridging the Liberties of the Country, General *Gage*, who was that Year Governor, did him the Honor to negative the Choice.

The General Aſſembly being diſſolved, in Conſequence of the Diſputes with *Britain*, he then appeared an active Member of the ſeveral Provincial Congreſſes, and at the very Time when Hoſtilities commenced, was one of a Committee then attending the General Aſſembly of *Connecticut*, to ſolicit their Aſſiſtance in caſe ſuch an Event ſhould take Place; and was the following Summer upon another important Committee at *Ticonderoga*.

Fully perſuaded of the Juſtice of the *American* Cauſe, he embarked and perſevered in it to the laſt with a *Roman* Intrepidity, always expreſſing the fulleſt Aſſurance that *America* would finally be crowned with glorious Succeſs. Ready in the moſt difficult Times to ſerve his Country, he was choſen by the People, and acted for ſome Time, as a Colonel of a Regiment at the Commencement of Hoſtilities, before a regular Government was eſtabliſhed. In the moſt gloomy Periods, when *Howe* triumphed in the *Jerſies*, and *Burgoyne* gaſconaded

in

in the North, he was never heard to drop a deſponding Syllable.

At the Firſt General Aſſembly after the War commenced, held in *July* 1775, he was elected and appointed a Member of the Supreme Council, and ſerved as ſuch during that memorable Year. Being appointed Judge of Probate of Wills, &c. for the County of *Worceſter*, and the next *May* commiſſioned as a Juſtice of the honorable Superior Court, he reſigned his Seat at the Council Board at the next Election.

Solicited by the People of *Brookfield* to ſerve as their Delegate in the Grand Convention, held at *Cambridge* the Beginning of laſt Month, for the ſole Purpoſe of forming a Conſtitution or Mode of Government, he attended that highly important Buſineſs, and was there appointed a Member of the Committee ſelected for drafting a Conſtitution or Form of Government, to be reported to the Convention on the 28th Inſtant. His unremitted Aſſiduity in this arduous Taſk, added to a Debility of Body, occaſioned by a conſtant Application to public Buſineſs, ſerved to impair and deſtroy his Health, and produced a Fever of the bilious or putrid Kind, which put a Period to his valuable Life, juſt at the Cloſe of the 53d Year of his Age.

Judge *Foſter* was greatly confided in by this State.—His Integrity of Conduct—his extenſive Benevolence—his Zeal for the public Good—his Impartiality in the Seat of Juſtice—his Fortitude in the Hour of Adverſity, and his Perſeverance

APPENDIX.

Perſeverance in the general Practice of the Virtues of public and private Life, eſtabliſhed his Character as a firm and ſteady Patriot, a judicious and able Stateſman, an upright and impartial Judge, and as a worthy and reſpectable Member of Society. But we muſt leave it to the Pages of Hiſtory to exhibit thoſe Actions which will further illuſtrate his Character, and ſhew the Propriety of the general Lamentation for the Loſs ſuſtained by the Public, as well as his Family and particular Friends, in his Death.

our other copy has this orn. but is cut down,